

***HB5300, AN ACT REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL FOR THE MERGER OR CLOSING OF INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND PROHIBITING THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGES***

Thank you, Senator Slap, Representative Elliott, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee for this opportunity for me to speak today. I am here to testify in support of HB 5300. This bill provides necessary legislative oversight of any merger within the CSCU System, a power that the Legislature used to hold. Oversight is necessary. In order to demonstrate a financial savings, the System is cutting from the bottom level of staff while adding to the top layer of management, creating a staffing crisis at the colleges.

There are many reasons why I believe that the consolidation is detrimental for the 12 Community Colleges so I will only name a few.

But let me begin by saying that I am testifying today on behalf of the many faculty and staff too afraid to speak. You may have heard that the faculty and staff are happy with consolidation but that simply is not true. So many faculty and staff believe that the administration of the SO and BOR will find a way to retaliate against them if they speak up and oppose consolidation. The faculty believe that they could lose their jobs since that is what the BOR and SO is doing now.....laying our members off. This is not a collegial event. The feelings are fear and turmoil in most cases. This after working tirelessly and stepping up to help our students through their anxiety during the pandemic.

1. The decision by our current Board of Regents to move towards a single accreditation requires that the community college form a new bigger more expensive administration to oversee college operations separate from the CSCU System Office. Ten years ago the state moved to reduce the number of administrators in our community college system, the BOR is now adding a completely new middle management layer between the colleges and the CSCU System office, including a new building costing tax payers millions of dollars in New Britain. These middle managers do not interact or fully support students.
2. While supporters argue that the single accreditation will benefit students to create a seamless transfer, this can be done by articulation agreements without the additional costs of hiring numerous top administrators. I have 2 excellent articulation agreements for my students. One at UConn and the other at Southern CT State University. My students graduate in 2-3 semesters with a BS degree! My students are first generation, non-traditional, underrepresented students. This consolidation will hurt them.
3. There are alternatives. Far less expensive alternatives but efficient and effective like what the New Mexico CCs are doing. Let's consider these alternatives first.  
***Thank you.***